

VZCZCXYZ0002  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTUA #0573 1291040  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZUI RUEWMCE4893 1291028  
P 091040Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0000  
INFO MAGHREB COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEPGCA/USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 000573

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG (MHARRIS AND EHOPKINS)  
USEUCOM FOR J5  
DOD FOR USDP ADMIN/ISA/NESA//

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [TS](#)  
SUBJECT: VCJCS MAY 5 MEETING WITH FM ABDALLAH

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR ROBERT F. GODEC FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY. DURING HIS MAY 4-6 VISIT TO TUNISIA, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF ADMIRAL EDMUND GIAMBASTIANI MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ABDELWAHEB ABDALLAH ON MAY 5 TO DISCUSS BILATERAL MILITARY AND COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION. ABDALLAH SAID THAT, THANKS TO WISE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES, THE GOT IS IN FULL CONTROL OF THE DOMESTIC SITUATION. HOWEVER, ABDALLAH SAID THAT TUNISIA IS CONCERNED ABOUT EXTERNAL TERRORIST THREATS. ADM GIAMBASTIANI TOLD THE FM THAT COOPERATION ON THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM IS EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT AND SAID THAT THE USG LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUED DIALOGUE ON COUNTERTERRORISM ISSUES. ADM GIAMBASTIANI SAID THAT THE USG WANTS TO CONTINUE THE STRONG BILATERAL MILITARY ENGAGEMENT, INCLUDING FINALIZING A STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) PARTICIPANTS:

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ADMIRAL EDMUND GIAMBASTIANI, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
AMBASSADOR ROBERT F. GODEC  
COL RONALD TUGGLE, J5  
COL ROBERT NOLAN, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
MARK GORENFLO, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
SUSANNAH COOPER, EMBASSY NOTETAKER

TUNISIA

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FOREIGN MINISTER ABDELWAHEB ABDALLAH  
HATEM ATALLAH, CHIEF OF STAFF  
MOHAMED SALEH TEKAYA, OFFICE OF THE MINISTER  
SAIDA CHTIOUI, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE AMERICAS AND ASIA  
MHAMED CHELAIFA, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE AMERICAS AND ASIA  
HOLLA BACHTOBI, DIRECTOR FOR THE AMERICAS  
MOHAMED KANTARA, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION

13. (C) FOREIGN MINISTER ABDELWAHEB ABDALLAH BEGAN THE MEETING BY TELLING VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF ADMIRAL GIAMBASTIANI THAT TUNISIA CONSIDERS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES ONE OF "STRATEGIC COOPERATION". ABDALLAH SAID THAT THE GOT INSISTS ON MAINTAINING THE DOMESTIC STABILITY IT HAS ACHIEVED THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT DUE TO SIGNIFICANT GOT INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT, TUNISIA'S MILITARY BUDGET REMAINS MODEST. TUNISIA IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE SECURITY

SITUATION, SAID ABDALLAH, BUT IT DOES FACE THREATS FROM OUTSIDE ITS BORDERS, PARTICULARLY TO THE SOUTH AND WEST. ABDALLAH OPINED THAT THE UNITED STATES AND TUNISIA ENJOY EXCELLENT COOPERATION ON COUNTERTERRORISM ISSUES, BUT THAT THERE CAN BE FURTHER IMPROVEMENT.

¶4. (C) ADM GIAMBASTIANI TOLD THE FM THAT HIS VISIT DEMONSTRATED THE IMPORTANCE THE USG ATTACHES TO US-TUNISIAN MILITARY COOPERATION. HE STRESSED THAT CONTINUED COOPERATION ON THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. ADM GIAMBASTIANI COMPLIMENTED THE GOT'S DISRUPTION OF A TERRORIST CELL IN DECEMBER 2006 AND JANUARY 2007 AND SAID THE USG LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUED COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION. RECOGNIZING GOT DISAPPOINTMENT OVER DECREASING FMF FUNDING IN FY08, ADM GIAMBASTIANI SAID THAT HE HOPES TO FIND A WAY TO CONTINUE USG SUPPORT FOR THE TUNISIAN MILITARY. THE ADMIRAL ASKED FOR THE MINISTER'S ATTENTION TO THE GOT'S REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT (SOFA), WHICH WOULD BE A TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AT THE UPCOMING JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION. ABDALLAH SAID THAT THE GOT IS IN THE PROCESS OF FINALIZING THE SOFA.

¶5. (C) ABDALLAH CLOSED THE MEETING BY SAYING HE HOPED TO SEE ADM GIAMBASTIANI DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN JUNE. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO RECEIVE FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RUMSFELD IN TUNIS IN FEBRUARY 2006 AND

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HAD PREVIOUSLY MET WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ENGLAND. ADM GIAMBASTIANI SAID HE HOPED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD ALSO MEET WITH SECRETARY GATES.

¶6. (U) THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF CLEARED THIS MESSAGE.  
GODEC